

## Executive Summary

- Project Description** – For Election Systems and Software to work with Design for Democracy and local graphical designers to make ballot design improvements for pilot counties in Nebraska by incorporating the best practices in effective ballot design.
- Objective** – Implement design suggestions for ballots in Cedar and Colfax Counties, while monitoring internal variable costs, customer costs, production schedules, review iterations, and identifying potential future enhancements to accommodate design best practices.
- Summary** - Several key lessons were learned about incorporating graphical design best practices into ballot layout. We were able to identify potential recommendations for future products and enhancements by identifying critical design elements and applying them to real-world ballots. Conversely, we were also able to identify design elements that may be time- or cost-prohibitive. We hope this report will provide insight into the basic barriers that must be overcome to incorporate these best practices.

Republican Official Ballot, Primary Election, May 9, 2006		
Cedar County	Nebria Primary	PCT 01 (1)
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TO VOTE YOU MUST COMPLETELY BLACKEN THE OVAL ( ). Use only the marking device provided.</li> <li>2. FOR A WRITE-IN, write in the name on the line provided and blacken the oval next to it.</li> <li>3. DO NOT CROSS OUT OR ERASE. If you spoil your ballot, exchange that ballot for a new one.</li> <li>4. AFTER VOTING, insert your ballot in the ballot sleeve. DO NOT FOLD THE BALLOT.</li> </ol> <p><b>SENATORIAL TICKET</b></p> <p>UNITED STATES SENATOR Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>David J. Kramer</li> <li>Don Stenberg</li> <li>Pete Ricketts</li> </ul> <p><b>CONGRESSIONAL TICKET</b></p> <p>REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS District Three Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Douglas Polk</li> <li>John Hanson</li> <li>Adrian Smith</li> <li>Jay Vawick</li> <li>David Harris</li> </ul> <p><b>STATE TICKET</b></p> <p>GOVERNOR Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dave Nabit</li> <li>Dave Heineman</li> <li>Tom Osborne</li> </ul> <p>SECRETARY OF STATE Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John A. Gale</li> </ul> <p><b>AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS</b> Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mike Foley</li> </ul> <p><b>COUNTY TICKET</b></p> <p>COUNTY TREASURER Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> </li> </ul> <p><b>ATTORNEY GENERAL</b> Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jon Bruning</li> </ul> <p><b>NONPARTISAN TICKET</b></p> <p>BOARD DIRECTORS NPPD SUBDISTRICT 11 Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wayne E. Boyd</li> <li>David P. Dowling</li> <li>Cleve Stolpe</li> </ul> <p><b>COUNTY TICKET</b></p> <p>COUNTY ASSESSOR Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shane Osborn</li> <li>Ron Ross</li> </ul> <p><b>LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT #0</b> Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cap Dieks</li> <li>Duane L. Dean</li> <li>Tom Noecker</li> </ul> <p><b>BOARD OF REGENTS DISTRICT 3</b> Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chuck Hasselbrook</li> </ul> <p><b>COUNTY ATTORNEY</b> Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>George L. Hirschbach</li> </ul> <p><b>COUNTY CLERK</b> Vote For ONE</p> <p><b>CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT</b> Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Janet Wiechelman</li> </ul> <p><b>COUNTY SHERIFF</b> Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Larry D. Koranda</li> </ul> <p><b>COUNTY COMMISSIONER DIST. 1</b> Vote For ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frederick Pinkelman</li> </ul> <p><b>VOTE BOTH SIDES</b></p>		
Typ:01 Seq:001 Sel:01	Republican Party	01 01

  

Official Ballot for General Election Cedar County, Nebraska - Tuesday, November 07, 2006		
Cedar County	State of Nebraska	PCT 01 (1)
<p><b>i Voting Instructions</b></p> <p>Fill in the oval to the left of the name of your choice. Vote for one candidate in each contest unless otherwise indicated.</p>  <p>You must blacken the oval completely. Use only the marker found in the voting booth.</p> <p>You may write in a candidate by placing that name on the blank line and filling in the oval to the left.</p> <p><b>write-in / escrito</b></p>  <p>After voting, insert your ballot in the ballot sleeve. Do not fold the ballot.</p> <p><b>Start Voting Here</b></p> <p><b>For Governor</b> Vote for ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dave Heineman Governor</li> <li>Rick Sheehy Lt. Governor</li> </ul> <p><b>For Auditor of Public Accounts</b> Vote for ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mike Foley Republican</li> <li>Kate Witek Democrat</li> <li>Kelly Renee Rosberg Nebraska</li> <li>Steve Larrick Green</li> <li>write-in</li> </ul> <p><b>For Attorney General</b> Vote for ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jon Bruning Republican</li> <li>write-in</li> </ul> <p><b>For County Assessor</b> Vote for ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don J. Hoesing Democrat</li> <li>write-in</li> </ul> <p><b>For Secretary of State</b> Vote for ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John A. Gale Republican</li> <li>Jay C. Stoddard Democrat</li> <li>Doug Paterson Green</li> <li>write-in</li> </ul> <p><b>For County Attorney</b> Vote for ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>George L. Hirschbach Republican</li> <li>write-in</li> </ul> <p><b>For State Treasurer</b> Vote for ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pete Ricketts Republican</li> <li>Ben Nelson Democrat</li> <li>write-in</li> </ul> <p><b>For Representative in Congress District THREE</b> Vote for ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adrian Smith Republican</li> <li>Scott Kleeb Democrat</li> <li>write-in</li> </ul> <p><b>For Clerk of the District Court</b> Vote for ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Janet R. Wiechelman Republican</li> <li>Lila Driver Democrat</li> <li>write-in</li> </ul> <p><b>Continue Voting Next Side</b></p>		
Typ:01 Seq:001 Spd:01	0	01 01

Adam Carbullido, Project Manager, ES&S

## Lessons Learned

- **Overall application of design best practices** - Most of the design best practices were implemented easily. The primary reasons that elements were not entirely incorporated into the final ballot design were potential effects on customer costs due to increases in ballot length or additional pages and/or the need for enhancements to the ES&S software to incorporate more flexible graphical design elements. Software enhancements would need to go through certification at the federal and state levels.
- **Size increases can affect costs** - Elements such as increased size of fonts, instructions, spacing, and headers directly affected the length of the ballot. Larger or additional pages can increase printing costs to the county and require additional pages and costs per voter. In several counties, including Cedar and Colfax, increasing page size is further cost prohibitive, because it would require the purchase of larger ballot boxes.
- **Shaded areas can affect costs** - Shaded headers and graphic areas increase the overall toner or ink usage in the ballot printing process, which can result in a nearly 4-fold increase in printing costs. By printing ballots "in-house", Cedar County experienced significant increases in printing costs compared with past elections.
- **Timeline requires early efforts** - Colfax and Cedar counties' ballot proofing process went through 10 additional ballot review cycles when compared to the average county in Nebraska and logged over twice the duration of ballot layout work time (17 hours, compared to an average of 7 hours for other Nebraska counties). With already tightening timelines between candidate certifications and requirements for absentee and early voter ballots, these increased review and work times can be difficult to accommodate.
- **Incorporating jurisdictional relevancy** - The actual ballot required several elements that were not fully reflected in the best practices design. For example, the increased complexity of Spanish contest title translations and overall quantity of contests per ballot affected the overall look and cluttered the layout of the ballot. In addition, some elements of the best practices design crossed over in to areas of the ballot that are required by optical mark readers. Furthermore, the overall number of ballot style iterations made the implementing, proofing, and review process more complex.

## Recommendations

- **Consider cost efficient design practices** - Consider and analyze the effects that design elements may have on costs to the county. Avoiding, or reducing, design elements that increase toner coverage or increase ballot length can result in savings to the county.
- **Promote state-level ballot templates** - Increased complexity of elections and tightening timelines that are needed to accommodate longer absentee periods and overseas voters can make increases in ballot layout time difficult. When creating ballots, accuracy is the top priority, followed by timeliness of ballot delivery. Design best practices must be incorporated well in advance of candidate certification to avoid disrupting these key priorities. In addition, implementing design best practices on a county-by-county basis allows individual jurisdictions to be selective with micro-level ballot details. This can increase production and layout times and create inconsistencies in ballot design between counties. By developing statewide ballot templates, election authorities, election vendors, and graphical designers can work together to incorporate each group's shared interest in improving ballot designs and, ultimately, the voting experience.
- **Continue shared education and open forum** - This project has provided an excellent opportunity to learn best practices in graphical design as they apply to ballot design and voter education. Through this, ES&S will be able to apply what we have learned to improve internal processes and incorporate flexible design elements in future products and enhancements. As design best practices and ballot layout continue to blend, open forum and shared education opportunities between design experts and elections vendors will continue to result in the overall improvement of ballot design.